

Remarks
U.S. Ambassador James Zumwalt
Joint Annual Review of the USAID Portfolio
With the Government of Senegal
July 12, 2016

Mr. Minister,
Mr. Director of the Direction de la Coopération Économique et Financière (DCEF),
Directors and technical staff of partner ministries,
Distinguished partners and implementing agencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is truly a pleasure to be here today to participate in the annual review of the development cooperation portfolio between USAID and the Government of Senegal.

The review gives us a chance to reflect on our many successes, and consider some remaining challenges, to achieving our shared objectives in the coming years.

The United States provided about \$118 million (about 69 billion francs CFA) in assistance to Senegal through USAID in 2015, reflecting a vast and successful partnership between our two countries.

Let me first summarize some of the impressive results.

In the Agricultural sector, Senegal is on the way to achieving self-sufficiency in rice, an outcome to which USAID and other Agriculture sector actors contributed in two ways: by improving productivity of rain-fed rice particularly in the Casamance region and irrigated rice in the Senegal River valley; and by expanding markets.

Senegal has also registered huge increases in cereal production and increased sales for locally produced millet, maize and rice, with USAID investment in improved seeds and yields resulting in the sale of 160,000 metric tons of grain worth 15 billion CFA in 2015.

USAID also supports Senegal's efforts to reduce illegal fishing, associated with more than 177 billion CFA in lost revenues each year.

Working closely with the Ministry of Fisheries, USAID programs helped preserve Senegal's fisheries resource base, through community based management of 600,000 hectares of marine and coastal resources.

In the health sector, the Government of Senegal is achieving extraordinary results from the long and fruitful partnership with USAID.

Access to health services has dramatically improved through expansion of the network of community Health Huts, an innovation introduced by USAID and piloted by

the Ministry of Health in the early 2000s, to train community health volunteers to provide first-line treatment and care.

Access to modern contraceptives has also dramatically increased, with a prevalence rate of 21 percent at present, helping families to increase birth spacing to protect the health of mothers and children.

These, and other advancements, contributed to a 55 percent decrease in child and infant mortality in the last 10 years, distinguishing Senegal as one of the most improved nations of Africa in terms of health outcomes.

In 2015, USAID also supported the Health Ministry to promote universal health insurance coverage by extending community based health insurance – *mutuelles* – to the poorest 20 percent of the population.

The U.S. government also initiated activities to improve Senegal's responsiveness to animal and human disease outbreaks through the Global Health Security Agenda.

We look forward to a strong collaboration with the Ministry of Health in preventing, treating and controlling outbreaks of infectious disease.

During the last rainy season, hospitals in regions of high malaria transmission reported a 61 percent decrease in malaria-related deaths and the country experienced a 56 percent drop nationally in malaria cases among children under ten years old.

These results are largely the result of a model program under which USAID provides direct funding to the National Malaria Control Program, to conduct indoor spraying for mosquitos, distribute millions of bed nets nationwide, and provide over 600,000 children with antimalarial medicine.

We also have a strong partnership in the area of education. USAID was proud to support the Ministry of Education's successful event in May in Kaolack to celebrate the Week of Basic Education.

We applaud the Ministry's leadership in elevating the importance of early grade reading to all development partners, including donors and local communities.

USAID has also worked together with the government to improve transparency. In partnership with the Ministry of Finance, the National Assembly, and civil society organizations we have developed an on-line platform to display the national budget and conducted outreach and training activities to increase public understanding of Senegal's public sector financial information.

In the coming year, we look forward to furthering these results, and our development partnership, in full alignment with the *Plan Senegal Emergent*.

We have results to be proud of, but the process is not complete. I'd like to turn to discussing some of the challenges going forward.

First, Senegal has made excellent progress on improving the private investment environment, but important reforms that are still needed. Key among these is a new land tenure policy that will open new opportunity for private investment in the agriculture sector.

We hope that the recommendations from the Land Tenure Commission will promote broad-based access to land including smallholders, women, and investors, and will be adopted and implemented in a timely manner.

Additionally, increased lending in the agriculture sector is needed for economic growth and poverty reduction.

One important way to encourage private investment in agriculture is to increase agricultural lending by encouraging banks to take more risk while reducing financial market distortions.

Increasing the private sector's share in the equity of banks operating in that sector as recommended by the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) is one way to accomplish this.

Second, maternal mortality lags behind other impressive gains in health indicators necessary to achieve Senegal's ambitious economic growth objectives.

We encourage stepped up measures to reduce the mortality risk for women in childbirth, such as improved availability of qualified health personnel in remote areas.

Third, decentralization reforms under Act III can significantly improve government service by expanding the role of Local Communities in basic service delivery.

We encourage the Government of Senegal to expedite the implementation of Act III reforms, and to increase budget allocations to Local Communities. USAID stands ready to assist, through a new project aimed at building management capacity of 50 *collectivites locales* in Kedougou and the Casamance beginning in 2016.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the commitment of the United States to strengthening our collaboration through USAID to improve the health and food security of families, get more children learning to read in school, and ensure economic opportunities for all people of Senegal to earn a decent living and provide for their families.

Let us continue to maintain the high quality of our partnership and our strong collaboration, as we work together toward the ambitious development goals of President Macky Sall's *Plan Sénégal Emergent*.

Thank you for your kind attention.

